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BIRTH CUSTOMS OF THE TAWSUG, COMPARED WITH THOSE OF OTHER PHILIPPINE GROUPS

By J. FRANKLIN EWING, S.J.

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The Tawsug inhabit the Sulu Archipelago, the islands of which form stepping stones between the southern Philippines and Borneo. The Tawsug are one of the groups in the southern Philippines called "Moros" in the Spanish literature and today, because they give adherence to Islam. They differ somewhat from the other peoples of the southern Philippines because of the fact that they have adopted Islam; at least, this is the principal reason. However, as we shall show in this (and in future papers), they are an integral part of the Southeast Asian culture area, and of the smaller culture area of the Philippines.

Some information about some other rites of passage of the Tawsug may be found in a previous paper (Ewing, 1958).¹ Here we consider the birth of a child and its immediate sequelae.

DELIVERY

When the moment of birth draws near, the parturient stretches out on a mat. In this part of the world, the floors of the houses are made of lathes of split bamboo, lashed with rattan, so that there is a small space between each lathe. For mattress purposes, mats are woven of pandanus or other palm frondlets. These mats are spread on the resilient floors.

The midwife squats between the extended and separated legs of the woman to be delivered. An assistant stations herself at the side of the parturient, ready to press down on the abdomen of the prospective mother, and so assist delivery.

When the baby is completely delivered, the midwife cries out, "*Yasawlah*", according to one informant. Presuming this to be the Arabic "*Ya sa'ad Allah*", the meaning is "Oh help of God." At this time, those nearby are instructed to make noise, by stamping their feet and shouting. This, no doubt, is designed to frighten off such spirits as may have evil designs on the child. That there

¹For an interesting facet of Tawsug culture, compare Ewing (1955)

are such spirits lurking about at the time of birth is a universal Philippine belief.

As soon as the child is born, the father goes beneath the house (which is built on posts), and outlines the space occupied by the mat on which mother and child repose with orange or lemon twigs. If there are no orange branches available, what an informant described as "thorny shells" from the beach would be almost as effective. Other objects equipped with thorns could also be employed. This is to prevent the *balbalán* from harming the baby. The *balbalán* is a human witch, which flies about particularly at night, and feeds on corpses. In this case, it may so frighten the newborn baby that it dies, and thus becomes food.

On the occasion of funerals, the Tawsug place things of iron (usually bolos, large knives) near the corpse; they light a lamp under the house; or they hang a crab shell somewhere about the house; around the grave are set up bamboo poles, to which charms, written in Arabic are attached. These are all effective against the *balbalán*.

The use of citrus fruit branches as a means of warding off the *buso*, or malignant spirits, is common throughout the southern Philippine tribes. Thus, lemon branches or leaves are employed by the Bagobos (Benedict, 1916, 41-42) and the Manobos (Garvan, 1931, 196). The Christian Bisayans of Bohol and Siquijor Islands consider a basin of water with a lemon floating on the surface of the water a specific against the *wak-wak*, which is essentially the Tawsug *balbalán* (Beyer, 1918, III, 86:8).² The *balbal* of the Bisayans of Mindanao [and of the Tirurays (Segayan, 1892, 19)] is a generally harmful and necrophagous witch; but the *asuang* is a horrible creature, whose head and entrails fly off (leaving the rest of the body behind) to enjoy a meal of a human corpse, that of a newborn baby being especially relished (Beyer, 1918, II, 36:2-3, 44:7-9).

In the Bicol region of Luzon (Lynch, 1949), the term *asuang* is quite generic, and includes human witches who walk, who fly, and those whose head and entrails alone fly. In addition to those preventives and precautions which derive from Christianity (holy water, the crucifix, prayers, etc.), we note with interest the use of

² The Beyer Collection is to be found in the Congressional Library, and at Harvard University.

citrus fruits (the local *lemonsito* and *kalamansi* especially). The sting of the sting-ray is paralleled by its use by the Mindanao Subanuns; the suspension of fishhooks under the house is not far removed from the concept of thorns (crab shells, "thorny shells") in the Tawsug area; knives pointing down through the floor are certainly cognate with the use of bolos at the Tawsug graves.

Considering material somewhat farther afield, it is interesting that Snouck Hurgronje (1906, 1:377) mentions the use by the Achenese of the thorns of the pandan against the *burong*, a creature akin to the *asuang*, inasmuch as it flies about with only head and entrails, and is desirous of eating newborn babies. On the Peninsula, the *balbalan* or *asuang* is called the *penanggalan*, and thorny branches are hung over the door to protect the household against it (Wilkinson, 1908, 52); Skeat (1900, 328, 344) mentions the fact that the thorns are intended to entangle the intestines of the *penanggalan*. Limes are used in the evil-expelling purifying drink of the Batak sacrifices (Bartlett, 1930, 15, 17, 18).

THE UMBILICAL CORD

The midwife severs the umbilical cord by wrapping around it several turns of hemp fiber, and pulling vigorously at the two ends. I am not too happy about the accounts of my informants about this operation, and am seeking further information on the subject.

In all other parts of the pagan southern Philippines the use of a bamboo knife is obligatory. This is true among the Manobos (Garvan, 1931, 114), the Bilaans (Cole, 1913, 143), the Tirurays and the Subanuns (as I was steadfastly informed), and it was also the ancient custom of the Christian Bisayans. As a matter of fact, this brings out the fact that iron was of relatively recent introduction into the area; although possessing magical qualities (as against evil spirits), it was not trusted for important functions which involved more ancient materials and techniques.

The umbilical cord and the afterbirth must be carefully disposed of, and this is a universal attitude in our area. Among the Tawsug, a whole coconut is brought in, and a small hole made in it, through which the milk and the meat are extracted. The umbilical cord, the placenta and some ashes are placed in the coconut, which is thereupon buried at one or the other side of the house approach. If no ashes be included, the child will even-

tually develop stomach trouble. If the coconut and its contents be not buried, the child will later find the process of getting married very difficult indeed.

The disposition of the cord and the placenta differs somewhat from group to group in the southern Philippines. The Tiruray hang them in a container, usually made of bark, on a large tree in the forest. I was told by many that any tree would do, although Sigayan (1892, 66) mentions the *balete* tree (*Ficus urostigma*). Inasmuch as this is a dangerous tree, infested with malicious spirits (and so considered all over the pagan Philippines), I have my doubts. The Subanuns bury the cord and placenta under the house (Christie, 1909, 52); the Bagobos hang them against the side of the house (Cole, 1913, 143); the Manobos nearly always bury them under the house, but may hang them under the hearth (Garvan, 1931, 114); the Kulaman attach them to a branch of the molave tree (*Vitex littoralis*) (Cole, 1913, 156).

I have no evidence that the people of the southern Philippines (including the Tawsug) regard the afterbirth in the light of a sibling of the child, as mentioned elsewhere in Southeast Asia, e.g., by the Achenese (Snouck Hurgronje, 375), the Batak (Warneck, 1909, 9), and the Javanese (Kruijt, 1906, 25-26). But I was told several times by the Tiruray and the Subanuns of snake-siblings of the infant. When the snake dies, the child dies also.

AFTER THE BIRTH

The midwife rubs the baby with grated coconut meat, then washes it in water in which guava leaves have been steeped. After this washing, the infant is wrapped in a cloth and placed, with a prayer, by the side of the mother.

Christie (1909, 51-52) tells of a special birth-house, to which the mother retires with her child after the initial bathing; but on any occasion upon which I was in the vicinity of a birth among the Subanuns, this custom was not observed. Garvan (1931, 115) states that the Manobo mother, with her child, removes herself from the house after the bathing in order to avoid the sphere of the malignant spirits who are inevitably present during a birth.

A common practice in the Southeast Asian area was the "roasting" of the mother for some days after the birth. Thus, Christie (1909, 51) and Finley (1913, 40) attribute the custom to the

Subanuns. According to Cole (1922, 265), the Tinguians of Luzon kept a fire going for twenty-nine days near the mother; the Achenese did the same for forty-four days. Compare, also, statements by Ling Roth (1896, 1:99) and Skeat (1900, 342-43). However, this is not the current custom of the Tawsug, although numerous informants testify that it was formerly practised.

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE SOUL-CONCEPT AMONG THE BANTU-SPEAKING NGUNI-TRIBES OF SOUTH AFRICA*

By BRIAN M. DU TOIT
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The purpose of this paper is to consider some aspects of the fundamental belief system of the Nguni, namely, the worship of the ancestors. Specifically we will be concerned with a few major points; the distinction between the soul and the spirit as the Nguni conceive of it; the difference between family and tribal spirits; the appearance of these spirits to man, and finally the relationship between the living and the dead.

This paper pertains to a complex of Bantu-speaking tribes, fairly homogeneous with respect to culture and language, who, with the exception of the Ndebele who moved to the Transvaal little over a century ago, live in the eastern part of southern Africa on the plateau between the Drakensberg escarpment and the Indian Ocean. Generally, they can be divided into three groups, namely the Swazi in the north, the Zulu extending throughout Natal, and the tribes collectively spoken of as the southern Nguni, including the Xhosa, Pondo, Fingo, Ngqika, Baca, Bomvana and others. All of these tribes are historically related, but the passing of four centuries since their division and the influence of neighboring tribal groups, such as the Tonga in the north, Sotho in the west and Khoisan groups in the south have brought about the local linguistic and cultural differences that we observe today.

All the Nguni-tribes distinguish clearly in their conception of and their terminology for, the duality in the living person. Each human being has in addition to his physical body (called *umzimba* by the Zulu), a spiritual counterpart. This takes on the form of the shadow or personality (the Zulu *isithunzi*) or the breath (the Xhosa *umoya*), and as an old Xhosa told me, it is this which causes him to lead a good life—in other words it is seen as the conscience. The soul is localized in the chest or heart, or in the head, and according to some is an exact miniature replica of the

* This paper was read at the annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society, Palo Alto, California, April 1960.

human body. The soul of a living person can leave the body at will and frequently does so during sleep, and for this reason Schapera has called sleep "The little death." During these temporary departures of the soul it is not bound by time or space, and may visit at great distances while also being able to visit or interact with the spirits of previously deceased persons. Dreams, therefore, have great importance for these people and any visions seen in dreams are considered to be real and great importance is attached to them. In the case of a dream-visit from the ancestors other people or an agent might be called upon to explain the meaning, should the reason not be obvious. The soul also leaves the body in the case of seizures, visions and hallucinations, but returns to the body. As a man grows old his shadow is said to grow shorter and this is a sign of approaching death. This short, or real, shadow is buried with the deceased Zulu, while his long shadow, or soul, the Zulu *isithunzi*, leaves the corpse and will become a spirit.

After a death the corpse is buried, but the spiritual counterpart which has left the body, does not immediately go to the spirit world. The Nqika state that the spirit hovers over the body until *rigor mortis* has set in, and then only does it depart for the spirit world. The Zulu will guard a grave until a snake appears, which signifies that the soul has left the body and within a certain length of time (this varies from one to four years, and in the case of somebody killed by lightning it is five years) the *inkomo yokufa* (beast of the death) is killed, and the *Guyisa idlozi* ceremony takes place to "bring home" the spirit into the spirit world. The Baca tell of a hazy-shadowy substance which emerges from the corpse and continues to exist as the *ithfongo* of the deceased.

If death is a rite of passage for the living, then it is even more so for the deceased. At death and with the decomposition of the body that follows, the soul leaves it permanently, not only changing its form and habitat, but, according to the Nguni, also changing its name. Krige in her "Social System of the Zulu", uses the terms '*iDlozi* or *iThongo*' interchangeably even for the soul of a living Zulu. My Zulu informants insist, however, that they no longer speak of soul (*isithunzi*, *umoya* etc.) after death, but of a spirit (*idlozi*). The Swazi use the same term for the soul and the spirit, while the Zulu call a spirit *idlozi*, Xhosa *inyanya* and Ndebele *umzimu*, which is significantly also the term they use to

refer to their Supreme Being, namely *Zimu*. When speaking of the ancestors the Zulu refer to an *ithongo* (plural *amathongo*) which is merely the individual's share in this communal spiritual group. In the same way the Swazi speak of *idloti* (plural *emadloti*) or the Baca of *ithfongo* (plural *amathfongo*). Years ago W. H. I. Bleek collected his "Zulu Legends" and in discussing their dreams, he pointed out that the appearance of a spirit in a dream was as an *ithongo*, not as an *idlozi*, in other words, it seems to appear as representative of the communal ancestral spirits.

Mention has already been made of the appearance of spirits in dreams and in all cases these are interpreted as messages. The spirit is either unsatisfied with the conduct of his descendant, or conveys a message to him. South Africa has produced a variety of messianic movements, and the best known (that of the Xhosa girl *Nomgqawuse* whose dreams were interpreted by the "prophet" *Mhlakaza* and which led to the so called national suicide of 1856-57) was the direct result of a dream in which the ancestors appeared. In dreams the spirit appears with the same physical characteristics and he also retains the same preferences and dislikes as when he was alive. Should a young person dream of somebody whom he does not recognize, the matter will be discussed with others and an old man may reply, "Oh, so-and-so who died many years ago had those scars which you describe", or "Well, your grandfather looked like that, he lost his right eye in this or that battle." The spirits and their descendants live in symbiotic union, the one being dependent upon the other for its happy existence, and while spirits can affect the life of man, the reverse is also true; and a man will not be afraid to reprimand a spirit, if he believes the latter to be ill treating him. This interaction between the living and the dead is of the greatest importance for both. The spirits warn and bring messages to the living, while the latter make sacrifices to their ancestors. As a Bomvana explained, "The worst thing that can happen to a person is for him to die without children, for who will make sacrifices to him, or who will sing his praisesongs." Thus, while the spirits have left the mundane existence they still have certain needs which can only be satisfied by their descendants. Sacrifices, as on the occasion of childbirth, marriage and many others, are usually made in the *umsamo* (a little platform in the back of the hut) or in the *isiBaya* (cattle kraal) and from such sacrifices the spirits extract

the spiritual part, leaving behind the "dead" meat which can be eaten by the priest or leader in the sacrifice. Spirits can also be contacted through the dried gall bladder of a goat that has been sacrificed, which is worn around the wrist of a Baca diviner, and should a Pondo or Swazi headman decide to move his village to a new site, a sacrifice will be made near the graves of the deceased and the spirits will be asked to accompany them.

As regards the locality of the spirit world there is little agreement. Xhosa claim it to be near the cattle kraal, yet they pray to their deceased chiefs as "you who are above." A possible explanation could be found in the important distinction, to be discussed later, between family spirits and national or tribal spirits, for the first may be near the cattle kraal while the chiefs' spirits may ascend to a world above. At the funeral of a deceased chief the religious leader will say: "*uye kwindawo eziphakamileyo, senzelele!*" (You have gone to a higher place, intercede for us.) The Ndebele, as Fourie years ago pointed out in his doctoral dissertation, do not distinguish between the *umzimu* of a deceased relative and *Zimu*, the god, and either can be reached in *abazimu*, the spirit world. The Zulu myths tell of a hunter, *Umkachana*, who with a number of friends found and entered a hole in the ground which led to the spirit world. Furthermore, some informants stated that the spirit world was actually under the earth very close to the cattle kraal. They refer to *abantu abaphanzi* (the people underneath), yet other informants explained that the land of the spirits actually was above and from there they can watch the conduct of their descendants and the smoke of sacrifices ascend to them. Nevertheless, wherever this world of the spirits may be, the spirits are not bound to it and may move about freely, visiting their descendants and taking part in the ceremonial life and festivals of the living people. They are not thought of as being dead in the nihilistic sense of the word, nor do they have the "greatest dread of death" as Dudley Kidd (1904; 76) claimed, but, on the contrary, it is held that the dead are in a land of plenty, and that death is actually only a transition.

As regards the power of ancestral spirits, the Nguni hold that those spirits of recently deceased ancestors have greater concern for them and have a greater influence on their existence, than ancestors of a few generations back. A man will pray to his father or grandfather and ask them to intercede for him with their father

and so on up the line, even mentioning the names of previous relatives. However, those who have died many generations ago are in closer contact and have greater influence over the Supreme Being, or first ancestral spirit, and thus there is a seeming paradox in their approach to the ancestors. It should be remembered in this respect that the hierarchy which existed on earth is continued in the afterworld and that an elder brother still has a more senior position than a younger brother, and a person in life will avoid a quarrel with somebody who will in death be an ancestor to him. From this it should not, however, be thought that the living are mild and submissive to the ancestors. A man, if he feels he did not break a taboo or transgress a moral code, will ask the ancestor why he is treating him harshly and warn him that "if you kill me, who do you suppose is going to make sacrifices to you?"

Concerning the Supreme Being, various authors have claimed that the Nguni have a true god, while the opposition believed that he was merely the first ancestor. The Zulu speak of *Unkulunkulu* (the great-great one), the Swazi of *Mkhulumnqande* and the Xhosa of *Quamata*. This being is not of great importance in the everyday life of the Nguni and is not active to the extent that the ancestral spirits are, nor does he receive regular service like the latter. None of these tribes have a complex theology or think of the god as a creator *ex nihilo*, nor does he occupy a very important position in their world view. However, he may be called upon in cases of great danger and threatening tribal disaster like war, drought or famine. First, however, we must distinguish between the spirits of the family, and the spirits of the deceased chiefs or kings. In everyday life a person will never think of approaching the tribal ancestors, but will make his sacrifices and address his prayers to his family's spirits, requesting them to speak on his behalf with the senior spirits. The chief or king may do the same, dealing, however, with his family spirits. Should some national issue arise or some disaster affect the tribe, the religious leader, or chief or king's mother (among the Swazi), acts in the interest of the whole tribe and requests from them that they should have pity upon their living descendants and send rain, give them abundant crops or lead them in war. They are no longer the chief's family spirits, but are approached in their capacity as national spirits of the tribe. As the living chief or king is the father of his tribe, the deceased chief or king remains so, for the

afterworld is simply a continuation of the present one. Also, in similar circumstances of crisis, the Supreme Being may actually be mentioned and the tribal ancestors are requested to intercede for them with the Great-great one. We have here a clear distinction drawn between family and tribal ancestors, and also a clear distinction as regards their power and closeness to the god. If a personal or family matter is at stake, a person will approach his father, grandfather and other relatives, the chief or king acting thus as other men, but when national disaster is threatening the request is made to the family spirits of the chief or king in their capacity as tribal spirits. Here, however, the objective may be to reach the Supreme Being and he is called upon through the ancestors to have pity on man. I am not implying that the Supreme Being occupies an important place in the Nguni religion for this he does not, but merely point out the possibility for people to call on him as on other Beings in certain circumstances.

Previously mention was made of the appearance of the spirits to their descendants in dreams, and so a man will lie down on his mat to sleep with a sacrifice of meat at his pillow in order that the spirits may speak to him when they come to partake of the gift. Another very common form of appearance is in the form of snakes and other reptiles. The belief that an ancestral spirit may take on the form of a snake is found throughout the Nguni area, although the specie of snake may differ according to the geographical region in which the tribe resides. Furthermore, a man will look and think twice before killing a snake which could be an ancestor to him. At this point it should be clarified that they do not hold that the spirit enters the body of an already existing snake, but that the spirit merely takes on the form of a snake. Kidd (1904; 84) and Brown (1926; 69) claimed that the spirit enters a living snake and Kidd further holds the belief that "These animals then serve as a modified totem. . . ." This, however, is not the case and no Nguni have totems with the exception of the Ndebele who have probably been influenced by Sotho tribes. Brinton, although writing at the end of the last century, offered an alternative explanation in his book on the "Religion of Primitive People," which should be considered, namely that these people are able to place themselves in a kind of auto-hypnosis, thereby hearing and seeing things that they would like to and that are oftentimes separated from them in time and space. The Nguni

is in a psychological state of expectancy, like people looking into the dark sky and seeing a great many Sputniks flash by, and is awaiting the appearance of his deceased father's spirit in the form of a snake, and when a snake is seen near the grave or in the village, and there are many snakes in South Africa, it is proof for him and his belief is strengthened. This, then, does not deny the possibility that real snakes may appear, and if it is of the right specie and bears certain scars, or has one eye, it is said to be the appearance of the deceased relative who had the same physical defects. Here once again we find the distinction between the form that the spirit of the common people takes and that of the chief or king. While the latter appears as a mamba (a greatly feared and very poisonous snake), the commoners can appear as various lesser snakes, e.g. brown and green snakes, while women take on the form of wasps and lizards. This is only a temporary appearance and has nothing whatsoever to do with reincarnation. As an example here, the case of one of my Baca informants can be mentioned. As a young man he left his home in the Umzimkulu district of the northern Transkei, and went north to Durban, some 50 miles distant, to work for a white family. "One morning," he told me, "I was cleaning the copper and silver ornament of the household. I was standing in the yard which swept clean and there were no trees or bushes near. Suddenly I noticed a green snake curled around my arm. Mrs. Jones, the white lady, saw it too and ran closer pale with fright, but as I lifted my arm to shake it off, the snake disappeared. I then went to some older men in the vicinity to ask them what it meant and they told me that it was a message from the *amathfongo*. That same afternoon I received a letter from my brother near Umzimkulu informing me of my mother's death." Although this man was at least 65 years old when I spoke to him, and had lived and worked in a white city ever since, he told it with the greatest sincerity and conviction.

As seen from this example, a person does not always know how to interpret the appearance of spirits, the crow of a cock or the voices of spirits heard in the roof of his hut, and for this reason we find a class of specialists acting as intermediaries and interpreters. There are *imilozi* or voices which are heard from the roof of the hut, and one class of specialists interprets or translates these

and the messages they convey. The most frequent way of getting at the root of what a vision or dream means, is by divination, especially the casting of the "bones." The objects used are animal astragali, shells, fruit stones, etc., and the method is found throughout southern Africa in one form or another. The procedure may have been borrowed from the Sotho, while Dornan (*"South African Journal of Science"*, Vol. XX, 1923) believes that all the Bantu originally acquired it from the Bushman. The third form of interpreting is by guessing, but this trial-by-error method is not so popular and is not as widespread as the others. In addition older people who have more experience and are closer to the spirit world may interpret or explain certain phenomena to the younger members of their tribe, for as age increases it is believed that the distance between this mundane life and the future life decreases.

In conclusion it should be mentioned that this system is in decline. For the past three centuries missionaries have been teaching the Christian religion among the South African tribes and even where conversions have not been made, doubt has arisen regarding the position of the ancestors. Especially the past half century has brought about a pronounced urbanization movement, and thousands of Nguni are at present living near and working in mines and factories. They have to a great extent lost contact with fellow tribal members in the reservations, and in the urban areas they do not continue the practices of their fathers. Hence we have not only a disintegration of the tribal system, but also a breakdown in the traditional extended family with its duties and responsibilities. The fact that the ancestors require a man to live as they did, does not encourage change and emphasizes the traditional. The chief now finds himself in a conflicting situation, for on the one hand as "father" of his people and as direct representative of the ancestors, he should preserve the traditional and continue the life ways of those who have gone before, yet, on the other hand, he is the representative of his people and must lead them in changing situations. With the abandonment of the traditional religion people lose a stabilizing factor in their lives. While the cohesive social groups of the past, allied to their ancestors, have broken down, we find in their place isolated individuals who have little stability and weak family ties, for whom the worship of the ancestors seems to have less to offer, and in this

period of reorganization they are grasping for a substitute to bind them together and once again give them something of value.

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URBANIZATION IN NIGERIA

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The tremendous changes that are taking place in modern Africa are largely centered around political development and nationalist movements. Yet none of this contemporary upheaval is really understood without some insight into the socio-anthropological factors which have provided the foundation for much of the shifting away from age-old traditional practices. One of the major pressures here has been the spread of urbanization in Africa and the purpose of this paper is to analyze briefly this process as it applies to Nigeria, the largest populated territory on the African continent.¹

Buchanan and Pugh (1955; 63) have pointed out the difficulty of trying to apply western concepts of urbanization to Nigeria:

It is difficult to discuss the degree of urbanization in Nigeria. In part the difficulty arises from the deficiencies of the statistical material . . . in part from the character of the "towns" themselves. Many of these lack the basic services and functions which constitute the criteria of an urban area in the West, and their population is often dominantly agricultural, working in the surrounding countryside during part at least of the year. They are, in short, more closely related to the "urban villages" of the Spanish meseta or the Hungarian plain, than to the normal Western European urban area. The qualification is especially true in the Eastern Provinces—in Iboland and the Cameroons—where settlements such as Otuocha-Aguleri or Bali are scarcely more than five-figure clusters of population with little functional significance; it applies even in the urban zones of Yorubaland and Hausaland, with their long traditions of compact settlement; and perhaps the only exceptions are centers such as Lagos or Jos which owe their development largely to European influences.

¹ The analysis here is based on data gathered during a field trip to Nigeria in 1957-1958 under a grant from the Ford Foundation and aid from the Crossroads Africa Program of the Morningside Community Center in New York City.

One might add that the central city or town, with its marketplace, municipal government, and outlying villages loosely considered a part of the whole, bears some resemblance to the Japanese concept of a city, which counts in its population villages several miles removed from the core area.

The Nigerian city, then, is not typically a self-contained unit whose attention has turned inward. It does not provide in kind and degree many of the services and facilities associated with western cities: a sewage system, street lighting, municipal power plants and water supply, paved streets and sidewalks, parks and playgrounds, police and fire protection, public health inspection and supervision, hospitals, libraries, and schools. A city as large as Akure (38,853 in 1952) may be without electricity; Benin (53,753) without street lights; Kano (130,173) with no public library.²

If we define "city" by inclusion in the 1958 *Nigeria Year Book* as a principal city (none of which, at last census, in 1952, had a population as small as 20,000), there are 54 cities in Nigeria, with a total population of 3,222,367, or 10.6 per cent of the 1952 population of the country.³ Eighteen of these cities had populations in excess of 50,000; seven had over 100,000 people.⁴ We may assume that most of them have grown since that time and that the expansion of governmental functions in the regional capitals of Ibadan, Enugu, and Kaduna and the federal district of Lagos have greatly increased their populations. Moreover, one can assume that the recent establishment or expansion of industrial or commercial enterprises in cities such as Aba or Kaduna has attracted additional workers to those cities.

Granted that Nigerian cities are less unified than are most of their western counterparts, what sort of unity exists? What is the

² It should be noted that in the reporting of population figures in Nigeria one finds a variation in statistics from one government source to another. Those used here are taken mainly from the *Nigeria Year Book* 1958 wherein it is stated compilations have been made from official government sources.

³ *Nigeria Year Book*, 1958 (figures are from the 1952 census, which are the latest official figures available from the Nigerian Department of Census and Statistics, Lagos), pp. 179, 199, and 217.

⁴ Ibadan (459,196), Lagos (337,000), Ogbomoso (139,535), Kano (130,173), Oshogbo (122,728), Ife (110,790), Iwo (100,006), Abeokuta (84,451), Onitsha (76,921), Oyo (72,133), Ilesha (72,029), Port Harcourt (71,634), Enugu (62,764), Aba (57,787), Yerwa (54,646), Zaria (53,974), Benin (53,753), Katsina (52,672).

cohesive force which holds them together? First, there is the government. All of the cities are seats of at least local government; Lagos is the federal capital; and Ibadan, Enugu, and Kaduna are regional capitals. All people look to the government as the supreme secular authority; many of them work for the government or its officials, or sell goods or services to the latter. Government service comes to be identified with secure economic and social status, and education comes to be valued as a prerequisite for a better job with higher pay.

Second, the city is the unit of commerce, providing goods and services to the whole population. The market place, supplemented by western shops and department stores (usually nearby) organizes the distribution of goods to consumers—all the people. The movie theaters and railroad station, if any, serve all. The availability of goods identified with economic advancement affords temptation to all.

Third, there is physical proximity, with its sharing of streets, hospitals, schools, post offices, perhaps a water supply, and such festive occasions as sports events or a visit from royalty or government ministers.

Fourth, there is English, the *lingua franca* of the land, which ties together the diverse educated elements of the population and extends down the socio-economic scale to the masses to the extent that many workers must learn at least a few words for use in employment or trading with persons who do not speak the same indigenous tongue. To some extent, this partially unifying status is shared by the three chief regional languages: Yoruba in the West, Ibo in the East, and Hausa in the North. Certain cities have a dominant local language, as does Benin (the Bini tongue).

All of these unifying forces are impersonal ones, not in themselves calculated to arouse strong identification with all the local peoples or emotional ties to one's city. Nevertheless, citizens of Onitsha express pride in their modern market, those of Ibadan in their spectacularly modern, up-to-date University College and Hospital, those of Kano in their towered mosque, those of Benin in their arts. The city is not all uneasy, unsettling in its changing. Increasingly, it is developing its own institutions and social patterns, its own stability. These tend to be identified with "progress" and to attach new values to "improving"—whether in living

standards, community services, job assignments, education, or social status.

The unifying characteristics of Nigerian cities are common to all regions. In all regions, cities share the broad outlines of the African metropolis described above. At the same time, there are differences in the urbanization patterns of the three.

In the southern part of the country, regional governments have been aware of the possibility of developing industrial enterprises where population concentration has been great enough for production based upon efficient division of labor. In both Western and Eastern Regions, government attention has been given to the planning and development of cities, some public housing, educational and welfare institutions, the encouragement of commercial building construction, and the raising of the standard of living through enlightened economic policies and government research and enterprise.⁵

In the Eastern Region, for example, a government Community Development Department encourages voluntary cooperative self-help projects (cf. Jackson 1958). The people of Awgu, for example, are proud of their Community Development Training Center and a nearby community hospital, constructed with labor and materials contributed by several nearby villages. The Community Development Department also employs a full-time Youth Organizer, whose duty it is to promote constructive recreational and other activities—Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, YWCA, and the like—for young people. There are other government agencies in both the East and the West to encourage economic development. It was government enterprise which constructed the Onitsha market—the largest, best organized, and most modern in Nigeria, with concrete floors, metal roofs, and wide paved sidewalks.

The Western Region, although smallest and least populous, boasts more and larger cities than either of the other regions. Five cities exceed 100,000 in population and 1,856,421, or 31.6

⁵ *Federal Nigeria: Being a Record of Progress and Development in the Federation of Nigeria*, vols. I and II (1958 and 1959), Washington, D. C.: The Nigeria Liaison Office; see also *The Role of the Federal Government in Promoting Industrial Development in Nigeria*, Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1958, Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1958 (545/358/R 1,000); National Economic Council of Nigeria, *Economic Survey of Nigeria*, Lagos: The Government Printer, 1959.

per cent of the 6,087,000 people who inhabit the Region live in cities of over 20,000 population. Ibadan is by far the largest city in Nigeria, having been developed (like most cities in the Western Region) by the Yorubas, whose traditional pattern of urban living long preceded the coming of European colonial rule. The old Yoruba cities were heterogeneous in both the economic and the social spheres, containing specialists in various crafts and lineage groups of varying status in the community (cf. Bascom 1955). This background has made the intrusion of European concepts of urbanization less unsettling, and the Yorubas have absorbed new forces (resulting in large part from Western influence) without having been uprooted. Thus they have been able to continue traditional family locations and ties in a familiar community, with the advantages of security and stability accompanying the new ways of developing in the old cities.

The tendency of the Ibos of the Eastern Region to migrate to cities in other parts of the country in search of employment implies that there are more of them urbanized than their own regional figures indicate. The 454,967 population in cities of the East comprised 6.3 per cent of the Region's 7,218,000 population in 1952. The largest city, Onitsha, had a population of 76,921, and three other cities exceeded 50,000 in population (Port Harcourt, Enugu, and Aba). Since 1952 the development of Enugu as a government center and the expansion of industry in Aba, the docks in Port Harcourt, and the above-mentioned market in Onitsha suggest strongly that urbanization is proceeding rapidly.

The Northern Region, with 573,979 of its 16,840,000 people living in cities with over 20,000 population, was only 3.5 per cent urban in 1952. Kano, the largest of the cities of the North, had a population of 130,173, and three other cities exceeded 50,000 population (Yerwa, Zaria, Katsina). The Moslem Hausa-Fulani people have long lived in walled cities which are ethnically relatively homogeneous. They have resisted assimilation of immigrants from other regions; thus their high-walled, closely packed, densely populated compounds, reached by a maze of narrow unpaved alleyways and streets, have remained aloof from newcomers. The literate southern immigrants who come to the North to work as clerks, accountants, foremen, teachers or other civil servants, or as employees of European commercial enterprises, live in *sabon garis* ("new cities") outside the walls. European commer-

cial buildings and government areas, movie houses, railroads, and government schools generally comprise a newer section of town, as they do in other parts of Nigeria, where they are outside psychological, rather than physical walls (cf. Buchanan and Pugh 1955: 63-73).

In concluding it should be kept in mind that, in all three regions and the federal district of Nigeria, the city provides the circumstances for rapid and extensive changes. It is a place where many persons are at a distance from their extended-family and village roots. It is a place where temptations and opportunities motivate individual ambition. It is a place where the value of education is demonstrably high. Finally, it is a place where one daily sees examples of individual achievement on the basis of personal skills and competence.

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A MODERN ETHIOPIAN PLAY — SELFSTUDY IN CULTURE CHANGE

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Introduction

Anthropological literature, particularly ethnography and "culture and personality" studies, often contain native texts, reports of dreams, etc., that reveal the imagery and aspects of dynamics of the culture. Perhaps more data of this kind should be reported to reflect the present-day dynamics of acculturation, showing the manner in which native artists, writers, et al., use the new, Western forms as media of expression. Historians find not only the literature of the period under analysis significant, but also take into account the audience reaction of the time—for example, reactions to performances of Shakespeare in the 17th century. It is with these points in mind that the following material relating to a dramatic performance in Ethiopia is presented.

Western elementary and high schools—at first mainly French—have been introduced in Ethiopia only in the 20th century, mainly since the late 1920's. High school seniors have usually not travelled outside the country so that their image of the West derives largely from their studies and from Western instructors, plus such limited indirect experience as may be obtained through the movies.

The author of the play which is analyzed in the present paper, was 18 years old at the time of its public performance. He had then recently graduated from the French Lycée of Addis Ababa. The play was entitled *Enena Kefatey* ("I and My Evil") and was evidently influenced by the medieval European morality play—an approach readily understood by present-day Ethiopian audiences whose religious life still is dominated by an intensity and personal involvement reminiscent of medieval European Christianity. Furthermore, as in some of the later European morality plays, the humor arising out of keen, skeptical analysis of human behavior breaks through the serious mold and is

readily appreciated by the audience. While the structure and model of the play can be regarded as European, the content, gestures, and other forms of communication in the play were of course Ethiopian, especially of the Amhara type, since the performance was given in that language.

The purpose of the author was to portray traditional customs and values and to show what happens in human interaction when these old patterns clash with modern Western ones in present-day Addis Ababa.

The Emperor Haile Selassie has long urged cultural modernization.¹ This stimulus has borne fruit largely in his capital, Addis Ababa, but hardly at all in the provinces. In recent years the Municipality of Addis Ababa has established a Theatrical Committee, which chooses plays for performances on Sunday afternoon in a hall that seats about 400 persons. At the time this play was first performed, the tickets were priced from 40 cents to 80 cents (US). A ticket thus cost the equivalent of from one to two days labor for an unskilled, able-bodied male. The average socio-economic level represented by the audience was, however, roughly "middle-class" and many men had brought their womenfolk. There was a sprinkling of upper-class nobility and officialdom, and in addition a number of students from the University College of Addis Ababa, who had accompanied me and who helped me with translation and their own observations. I was the sole non-Ethiopian in the audience.

The age of the persons in the audience was significant since there were few persons beyond middle age, and most were young or in early middle age. There were also a number of older children, including teen-agers brought by parents. In view of the traditional separation by sex and leadership by the patriarchs, one could infer that play-going is a modern innovation. Nevertheless traditional dress of the audience was worn by most—white jodphurs for the men, and toga-like shammias for both men and women. The spontaneous reactions of the audience were also in the traditional "silent language": they covered the mouth often with the toga when embarrassed, but there was little inhibi-

¹Messing, Simon D.: "Changing Ethiopia." *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Autumn 1955. pp. 413-432.

tion of laughing and even of weeping. Throughout the play audience response was remarkably spontaneous, perhaps because the subject matter was so close to the dynamics of the acculturation they were experiencing in their daily lives.

Only a few of the actors and actresses were professional, but the amateurs evidently so enjoyed playing roles similar to those observed in their own lives in Addis Ababa, and the problems presented by the playwright were so real, that the performance was most effective. The play lasted three and a half hours.

In the following scene-by-scene analysis of the play, we shall attempt to point out the significant elements indicating acculturation.

Scene 1

A middle aged, bearded monk reads aloud from the pious Ethiopic book *MIRACLES OF ST. MICHAEL*. He falls asleep and St. Michael appears to him in a dream. The saint praises him for living a good life but admonishes him to go among his sinful kinsmen to warn them and to teach them knowledge and wisdom, for it is not enough to live a saintly life in isolation any more but is a duty to take a hand in the problems of everyday life.

Scene 2

The monk's arrival is announced to the peasant kinsman. The latter is common and coarse, with a high-pitched, often whining, voice which reaches an aggressive shrillness at the end of an utterance. His speech consists of ejaculated phrases in contrast to the calm, steady manner of speech of the monk. Although the peasant is eating his dinner of peppery meat-stew ("wot") and bread, he is too stingy to share his meal even with a kinsman so he orders all food hidden. What the monk has to say, and his very presence, make the peasant ill at ease, and he keeps draping and redraping his toga. Surprisingly, the monk advises his kinsman to move to the city, to Addis Ababa, so that his children will learn a more desirable life.

When the monk has departed, the servant protests the move. He claims that a city is no fit place to live, that he will miss the country air, and, finally, that the personal relations between

master and servant will be ruined and become formal. All complaints are of no avail, however, and the peasant, his wife, adolescent daughter and younger son pack their belongings in preparation for the move.

Scene 3

Several months later. The peasant has been superficially "citified" (which amuses the audience to whom the various cues are immediately evident). He now wears tight jodphurs but curses them for their tightness, as compared to the loose, rustic ones. The daughter has adjusted further to city life. She approaches him with the request to be permitted to go to school. He refuses on the grounds that a woman's place is in the home. When she persists, he threatens to cast her out of the house. The little boy uses the quarrel to win praise for saying that he would rather remain ignorant and stay with his parents.

At this point enters the peasant's Confessor from the country, a cleric hardly a rung above the peasant in rusticity. He talks as fast, as rapidly, and as shrilly, but tries hard to achieve a facade of old-fashioned respectability by covering his mouth with his toga, waving his flyswitch and placing his brass cross on everyone's forehead and mouth. (Clever satire on the part of the author). The Confessor is told of the school problem and agrees vehemently that the girl remain at home.

But after his departure a Mister ("Ato") Selassye enters, a young man of the city. He argues that if the daughter is given an education, she will know better how to honor her father and do her chores. This convinces the peasant.

Scene 4

The schoolroom, geography class in a co-ed school. The boys are rather mischievous, but the two girls, neatly attired in Western dresses, are restrained. The unruly boys amuse themselves by giving different answers to the question: "Name the provinces of Ethiopia" (which convulses the audience in laughter, perhaps because of the changes in regional administrative units). A director from the Ministry (who resembles a young Ethiopian trained in a foreign University) enters and inspects the notebooks. He praises the girls for their neatness and admonishes the boys.

Scene 5

The director of the school has fallen in love with the peasant's daughter, and when he finds her walking in the garden reading a book, he hands her a love note asking her to marry him. Next he sends his best man (the traditional "mizey") who describes the wooer's good character. Instead of taking the matter home, she discusses it with a girl friend.

Scene 6

The peasant's attire has proceeded to the next step in "citification." He now wears a khaki bush-jacket, but curses it for being made too long and hanging below his toga. "It will cost me an ox to fix it," he complains. In his annoyance, he orders his daughter to stop attending school on the grounds that she is too often away from home. She leaves the room weeping, and inadvertently drops the love letter from her pocket. The boy hands it to the father, and the illiterate peasant does not want to admit he cannot read. "Such small letters, yet such weighty matters," he exclaims wisely in his confusion (which convulses the audience). Finally he engages a reader. He is furious to learn the proposal is not properly addressed to him but to his daughter. He makes this an occasion for a general complaint, calling neighbors, the landlord, the Confessor and even the district baron ("genyazmatch") as witness and judge: "Listen, brethren! I sent her to school to learn to read and write, and she uses the knowledge to carry on correspondence with men!" shouts the father, obviously enjoying the commotion and the drama of his righteous anger. Not to be outdone, the Confessor chimes in: "He will carry her off in the street!"

Scene 7

In the school garden, the girl, out of her sufferings, prays. Her girl friend appears and the daughter tells of her shame, how her father discusses her with every stranger he meets over coffee. Enter the lover accompanied by a friend and the couples go off arm in arm—(so modern a custom that even the audience is embarrassed at this public display of affection).

Scene 8

The father has worked himself up to the point at which he

suggests to the Confessor that he pronounce a curse on his daughter over whom he feels he has lost control. Enter the bridegroom and friend, wearing togas over their Western suits—as sign of respect for the old ways. The peasant asks them to sit down, not knowing who they are, and obviously feeling honored—though he doesn't know the polite city term for asking a guest to take a seat. But when the visitors identify themselves and ask the father to consider the matter carefully, he chases them out of the house. Together with the Confessor, he conspires to sue the would-be groom in court for trying to abduct the young girl. But since they are illiterate, they have to pay a scribe half a dollar (Ethiopian) to draw up a letter of complaint.

Scene 9

The Court in session, three judges. The peasant and Confessor approach wearing a black cape—the country squire's insignia—in the traditional manner over their togas. They bow so low that their foreheads almost touch the ground, as was customary in the old days. The former suitor and friend enter, wearing modern suits, and bow slightly. The peasant and Confessor work up a theatrical rage, in the old tradition, glare at the opposition, even shout at the judges when testifying: "May God open your mind! May God make you see all!" They refold their togas, leaving a corner free in order to shake an accusing or challenging hand, while shouting shrilly, and stamping the ground with the right foot as they hop forward. (At this point the prolonged laughter of the audience interrupts the play.)

When the peasant is out of breath, the Confessor continues the testimony: "We gave birth to this girl! If we just give birth and have no control over her, it is just giving birth, not having a daughter! If he did not intend to abduct her, he should first have given us an ox!"

Finally the judge has to order the guard to stop the loud tirade. By contrast, the suitor quietly presents a written contract of marriage with the girl. The judges reflect, then announce that although the father has a right to control his daughter, she has at least a half-right to her major decisions, and the marriage is valid.

Shouting that he will appeal, the peasant takes loud comfort

from the fact that he and the Confessor "didn't give them even two minutes to talk."

Scene 10

Back at home, the peasant is dejected. He tells his wife their daughter has married and will go to England with her new husband (evidently on an official mission). As a last resort, after the wife has left, the father calls a sorcerer ("Tänqway") and buys a potion to place in the beer of the young couple. Then he bribes the boy who is servant in the couple's modern though modest home. He sends the mother back to the village to sell the harvest and bring the money. The boy accompanies her.

Scene 11

The young couple is poisoned, but is rescued in time by friends who take them to the hospital.

Scene 12

The bribed servant reports the successful poisoning to the peasant and Confessor who proceed to dance a victory jig. But suddenly the boy enters and reports that thieves have stolen the harvest money, killed his mother and burned the house. The jig turns into a funerary eulogy-dance ("lekso"), in which all lament their misery and desolation. Finally the Confessor's thoughts turn back to his business: "We must prepare for the Memorial feast! ("Tazkar," held forty days after death).

Scene 13

The memorial feast, forty days later, completely impoverishes the peasant. A roomful of country priests are being fed raw meat, peppery meat-stew, beer and bread. The peasant himself serves them, but does not eat unless someone forces food into his mouth. The funerary eulogy-dance resumes, ending in lamentations that the poor peasant must now live out his days in loneliness. He hides his face in a toga.

Scene 14

Having gone blind, the peasant has turned beggar, led by the young boy. By accident they arrive at his daughter's house. He tells her the story of his ungrateful daughter. She recognizes

them and feeds them a good meat-stew, bread and beer. "This stew tastes like my late wife's," remarks the peasant. The young husband returns home and is angry to find beggars at his table. But when he learns who they are, he takes the old man to the hospital where his eyes are operated on.

Scene 15

The bandages are off and the peasant can see again. He shouts "illil" (a shrill halleluya) and tries to kiss the feet of the doctor, of his daughter, and of his son-in-law. Finally he reclines back on his bed and philosophizes: "I and my evil deeds."

Analysis and Conclusion

The play seems at first a rather obvious melodrama. But its value lies in the numerous instances of sharp self-analysis, both on the part of the author and of his audience with whom he never broke communication during the presentation.

In the beginning, the monk—who represents sincere religion as contrasted with the hypocritical, ignorant and greedy country clerics—is taught a sort of "social gospel" by the archangel. This may reflect the influence of the Y.M.C.A. in Addis Ababa, but more likely reflects the repeated requests of the Emperor to the Coptic clergy to move in this direction.

The advice of the monk, that the peasant move to the city to seek a more respectable and less sinful life, runs counter to the Western views of the city as a place of greater wickedness than a rural community. But when one considers that feudal-type land-tenure continues in most of Ethiopia, and that modern legal safeguards for the individual are found, if at all, in the city, the new ethic is justified—certainly to an audience in Addis Ababa. Politeness and gentile behavior are correlated with urban, "urbane", and the concept of civilization is correlated with Western forms of etiquette in Addis Ababa (see footnote 1). Of course the rural nobles have traditional patterns of politeness of their own, but the rustic peasant in his traditional role had little share in them. "Politeness" is part of the culture change he experiences in the city.

The modest and noble bearing of the young "director," who

represents the young officialdom educated abroad at the Emperor's expense, and the patient wisdom of the city judges who preside over the changing legal concepts, are characterizations that cannot fail to please the sponsors. This perhaps explains why this play was chosen for one of the Sunday performances.

In conclusion, literature of this kind is increasingly being produced in many areas undergoing culture change, and offers valuable clues not only to parallel developments in Western history, but also to differentials in the urban subculture.

THE ACTIVITY BIAS OF ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE HISTORY OF SOCIETY

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Behavior constitutes an autonomous development from biological action and sensation, but is not identical with them. It appears, on the common sense level, as patterns which may be of three types: activity, external experiential, and internal experiential—exemplified, respectively, by walking, seeing, or a body feeling. A pattern can appear on the level of actuality, as an overt activity or an actual experience, or on the reduced intensity level of thought, as a covert activity or an image. Only overt activities, in terms of their physical concomitants, are immediately accessible to other individuals.

Ethnography usually concentrates on activity, and primarily overt activity, almost to the exclusion of experience. This is evidenced by the customary lists of phonemes, foods, tools, weapons, kinship groups, rituals, and economic performances. Such slanting of description has a threefold basis: the inadequacies of empiricist psychology, the inherent limitations of archeological inference, and the vagaries of the historiographic tradition.

As Newtonianism is being replaced by modern approaches, its abstractionist method degenerates into crude empiricism in which the only acceptable data are immediately observable ones. This finds expression in Watsonian behaviorism, which replaces conceptual analyses by statements of concomitance between overt activities, practically disregards experience, negates the obvious complexities of internal behavioral dynamics, and reduces the behavior system to an automaton. Ethnographic emphasis on activity is a corollary of behaviorist psychology.

Archeology, save for the excavation of written material, recovers artifacts, which means semi-permanent, physical manifestations of overt activity patterns. But many artifacts are destroyed before they can be of archeological interest, only a small percentage of all artifacts is recovered, the same artifacts can originate with diverse activities, not all overt activities eventuate in artifacts, not all activities are overt, and of all behavior patterns

only a small number are activity patterns. Hence, the archeologist is limited to an exceedingly small range of behavioral phenomena, and this restricted perspective has been extended to ethnographic work.

Writing, the keeping, summarizing, and abstracting of records was developed in and remained associated with cities and similar power centers. Such records were concerned with performances by, and significant for, power wielders. This tradition has persisted in the writing of history, even cultural history, so-called, frequently being simply a performance record. Following this lead, the ethnographer has turned into a recorder of still extant, but rapidly disappearing performances.

The ethnographic activity bias eventuates from these convergent developments. It manifests itself in a curious distortion of comparative and historic social analysis.

Small, non-literate, consumer-production societies, that is societies in which most production is carried on by the ultimate consumer himself, appear characterized by monotony, repetitiveness, routinization and conformity, with no diversification or change of activities. Large, literate, industrial societies, by contrast, seem to exhibit difference and variety, with great change and diversification of activities. In this view, the former societies are crude, poverty stricken, simple, and primitive, the latter rich, complex, and highly developed.

Since industrial, and even non-industrial, urban society is a most recent development, the vast majority of societies having been consumer-production societies, an activity focused approach will distort our historic perspective as well. It is thus, that ninety or more percent of all historically significant events will ostensibly have occurred since the beginning of the so-called upper paleolithic in, at the very most, four percent of the entire historic period, and that during this time change and diversification will presumably have increased at an ever accelerating pace.

Dealing first with this deplorable interpretation of history, we must pronounce it monstrous, despite the periodic resurrections of social evolutionism (for instance, Naroll 1956). There are several, well-nigh insurmountable, theoretical difficulties.

The unitariness of the human species for the last ten or twenty millenia is universally agreed upon. Unless we adopt the dis-

credited view of society as a "maturing organism", we must ask how it is possible that biologically identical organisms, with necessarily the same behavioral potentialities, produce ever more complex networks of inter-relations between them.

Also, how do we sustain such improvement? Freud's (Freud 1930) answer of increasing tension, and Durkheim's (Durkheim 1930) assertion of increasing specialization, as the concomitants of increasing complexity, are contradicted by historic evidence for the constancy of tension and the irregularity of changes in the degree of specialization and societal division of labor.

If we accept, as we probably should, the position of Weidenreich (Weidenreich 1946) and others (for instance, Montagu 1955) that all humans so far constitute a unitary species, the two questions just raised apply to the entire range, rather than just to the recent period of human history. In addition, we are now confronted with an inexplicable, sudden burst of human creativity concomitant with what was once thought to be the first appearance of *homo sapiens*.

The basis of these difficulties is obviously the assumption of differential complexity for industrial and consumer-production societies. This assumption becomes equally tenuous as soon as we supplement our activity record of contemporary societies by a record of characteristic experiences.

Goldenweiser (Goldenweiser 1936) long ago, and others (for instance, Mountford 1952) since him, have pointed out that members of consumer-production societies do not at all experience their life as either monotonous or routinized, but rather as one of challenge, adventure, freedom, and opportunity. Conversely, the typical experience in industrial society is one of oppression, the world appears to be "getting smaller," to be narrow, controlled, and without possibilities, as symbolized by Turner's (Turner 1893) vanishing "frontier." In both cases, the experience of it seems to contradict the experienced reality.

It is possible to reconcile these empirical contradictions, if we assume that the total variability of behavior is fairly constant from society to society, but manifests itself primarily as variability of experience in some, and as variability of activity in other societies. These may be referred to as perceptivist and activist societies respectively. Such a thesis also would imply that all societies are

about equally complex. Evidence can be adduced supporting this general view.

Members of activist societies, at times, develop experiences of startled wonder, surprise, and richness on contemplating, in a new and unfamiliar perspective, objects otherwise thoroughly known, but appearing, ordinarily, insignificant. Such experiences seem to be the rule, rather than the exception, and to set the overall feeling tone, for members of perceptivist societies.

Peasant enclaves in contemporary industrial societies exhibit many perceptivist traits. The range of activity variation in these sub-societies is smaller than in the larger society. But experiential variation is greater, as may be gleaned from the significance attached by members of such peasant groups to the first flower in spring, the first summer bird, or the eating ritual observed by a threshing crew.

The richness of experiential differentiation in genuine, contemporary consumer-production societies has often been attested. Witness only the detailed experience of the natural environment, which the member of an industrial society simply cannot duplicate.

Seen in terms of extreme types, these variations in experiential organization may be summarized in this way. In perceptivist societies, structurally identical activities are experienced as different phenomena, accounting for the continual experience of newness and uniqueness in the individual's everyday world, with the attendant surprise and expectation of limitless potentiality. In activist societies, differently structured activities are experienced as being the same, and the world of daily living, necessarily, appears in stereotyped monotony.

Applying the activist-perceptivist dichotomy to the history of world-society, our basic perspective changes and our theoretical difficulties disappear. We see a single species producing, by identical but varyingly distributed psychological processes, a great variety of equally complex but differently organized societies. Until, perhaps, ten-thousand years ago, these were almost completely perceptivist. Since then, an ever greater number of societies have become increasingly activist in their organization.

To repeat, perceptivist organization implies great variability, both serially and simultaneously, in the experiential patterns produced within a given society, with an attendant atrophying of activity variability. While then the activity record of earlier

human history would necessarily be meager, even if it could be fully recovered, we would have to assume the existence, during this period, of a tremendous creativity with regard to experiential patterns, eventuating in a multitude of constantly changing perspectives and outlooks among these, to us, shadowy and little known humans.

Rather than a sudden burst of creativity about ten-thousand years ago, we would be observing, at this beginning of recent human history, merely a shift in creativity from experiential to activity variability. The increasing impressiveness of the activity record, since then, according to the present assumptions, should be and is apparently accompanied by a steady decline in experiential creativity.

It may be asked whether this delineation of human history—"from perceptivism to activism"—does not still hide a social evolutionist bias. The allegation can be denied, first, because the long-term trend is frequently interrupted by short-term trends in the opposite direction.

A change from activism to perceptivism is discernible in the development of the quasi-feudal estate economy within the late Roman empire. Comparing the society of emigration with the newly developing society, we can observe parallel trends among the American colonists and the later Western migrants. The turn in feeling-tone from the waning middle ages to the renaissance, especially in Elizabethan England, indicates a corresponding shift in experiential organization, with the alteration in mood recorded from the metropolitan countries of continental Europe, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, furnishing a similar instance.

However, to dispel all possible charges of evolutionism, these changes, regardless of direction, must prove interpretable, non-teleologically, with reference to the dynamics of the societal pseudo-system itself, as we interpret, for instance, changes in fashion. The examples given provide the basis for such an approach.

In the cases of increasing perceptivism, we are dealing with population decline or with a spreading of the population into wider areas, both eventuating in decreasing population density. The opposite long-term trend is concomitant with an increase in

the population and its density. This suggests a positive correlation between the degree of activism and the frequency of interaction, the latter being higher with greater population density. Such a presumption is theoretically justifiable.

Behavioral organization develops in interaction. As its degree increases, the chance for the realization of behavioral potentialities, depending on such interaction, also increases. So will, however, the number and frequency of experiential patterns, which will, therefore, decline in complexity and uniqueness. Hence, dynamic potentiality will be realized, in indirect relation to interaction, through activity variation. With a low degree of interaction, realization of interactively based behavioral potentialities will occur intermittently but directly through complex and varied experiential patterns, activity development remaining secondary.

Population changes, in turn, through their technological base, are related to the degree of activity variability. Thus, population movements, as well as shifts in the activist or perceptivist features of social organization appear as concomitant manifestations of fortuitously inter-related random behavioral dynamics, with the complexity of societies staying constant throughout.

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NOTES AND NEWS

It was decided at the last meeting, in May, of the Catholic Anthropological Conference that next year's meeting will be held at St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri. The 1961 meeting will include formal papers to be presented and will thus broaden its interest for all anthropologists. **Dr. Allen Spitzer**, who was unanimously elected President of the Catholic Anthropological Conference, has been asked to set up an organizing committee. All those interested in participating or in reading a paper should correspond with him at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri.

Michael Kenny, Assistant-Professor in the Department of Anthropology, Catholic University of America, has received a twelve-month Fellowship under the Organization of American States program of the Pan-American Union to pursue follow-up studies of Spanish emigrants to Mexico and Cuba. He will be making a pilot study during the summer in the urban centers of these countries.

The American Anthropological Association has awarded **Dr. Allen Spitzer** a travel grant to attend the 34th International Congress of Americanists to be held in Vienna from July 18th to July 25th.

The Editor wishes to draw the attention of our readers to a new book entitled **The Missionary's Role in Socio-Economic Betterment** edited by John J. Considine, M.M., Newman Press, 1960; price \$1.75. The contributors consist of twelve lay specialists (including **Dr. Gottfried O. Lang** of this department), thirteen non-missionary clerical specialists and sixteen field missionaries chosen for their experience in the matter under consideration.



Dictionary of the American Indian

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formerly of the American Museum of Natural History

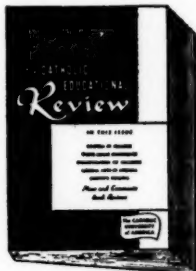
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